Harambee FLAME

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WE'RE MOVIN' ON UP.....

You know how the rest of the song goes--"to the deluxe apartments in the sky." It is an old song and an older story, one which involves, not only the desire on the part of African people in this country to improve their condition, but a longing on the part of many of these people to get the hell away from other African people. We hear constantly of "black-on-black crime." We may as well take this time to add to our lists of popular phrases a new one--"black-from-black flight."

How is it said? "You might as well call a spade a spade"? Though there can be no question but that some African people, upon achieving some level of economic movement upwards, leave "the ghetto" in order to get their children into better schools or to escape a criminal environment or to otherwise seek an improved condition. And certainly these are legitimate reasons for African people to move out into either black or white suburbia.

Regrettably, these are not the only reasons why some among us leave "the ghetto." Too often, this black-from-black flight occurs because those among us who see themselves as either "making it" or having "made it" determine that their increased income requires an increased material show of status. Consequently, what may have been a modest, though adequate, home becomes inadequate. A leather coat is no longer appropriate and gives way to fox or mink. Friends who were once fun to be with become "unsophisticated" or "no account."

We have learned from America well. Let it not be said that white people hold an exclusive grip on class snobbishness. But the business of black-from-black flight is not only indicative of class snobbishness. It is frequently founded upon feelings of ethnic inferiority. "Sweet Jesus, I can finally get away from those niggers."

The irony wrapped up in this phenomenon of black-from-black flight is that the very "undesirable" condition of the "ghetto" environment which so many of us are so quick to run from, when the opportunity presents itself, is made worse by the escaping from it. We might argue that "regular black folks" are better off without "them bourgeois negroes." To so argue, however, ignores both the potential for material revitalization of poor neighborhoods that the existence of an African middle class represents and the retention of positive role models which it can offer.

In regards to the question of material revitalization, much of the cost of purchasing a home or renting an apartment in suburbia is based upon land valuation. Because of relatively low land valuation in the inner-cities, there could be considerable savings for one purchasing a home there instead of in suburbia, even when the possible cost of initial investment for renovation is considered. Such savings could then be invested in cooperative neighborhood redevelopment efforts through which other homes could be rehabilitated and other important community projects could be initiated or maintained.

In the predominantly African community in Omaha, for example, an organization which could be used as a funnel for investment on the part of middle- and high-income Africans, and as a vehicle for neighborhood redevelopment, is North Omaha Community Development. It would require, however, that this organ come under community control and move to the status of community-run cooperative. Only in this way could the community insure that this or some other organization act consistently in the community's behalf.

One objection members of higher-income stratum of Africans in Omaha would have to remaining in the inner-city would be that of criminal activity. An answer to this objection is that the community cooperative(s) could, among its other projects, hire unemployed persons to function as neighborhood security officers and,

CHANGING TIMES

As we discover changing times, we must remember to have strength to endure. We have to have strength to withstand the pressures of Reaganomics, the cruelty of racism, and the ethnic put-downs by other minorities.

A lot of us go guessing through these times because we are not always aware of the substance of changes. To be able to attack a problem, we must know what it is we are dealing with. Whether the problem is racial, economic, or of some other origin, our awareness and understanding of it and willingness and ability to handle it is what keeps us moving to the top.

We must learn to stand on our own as soon as we become men or women in these ever-changing times. In the course of our lifetimes, much will be shown to us; but if we are ill-prepared, the meaning of what we see will pass us by. As American-born Afrikans, the knowledge we seek of our blackness brings about a change in us, change which is long overdue..

As we discover, then, the substance and meaning of these times, we must seek new directions. Armed with awareness, endurance, and strength, we can find that which we seek and make it to the top of human potential and fulfillment.

The climb will not be easy. We will go through changes, but nothing worth getting comes easy.

-Alan Hardin

WE'RE MOVIN' ON UP

at the same time, invest in the education of these men and women either in the area of academics or vocational training.

A more important response to crime than the hiring of community people for security is the very existence of higher-income African people in the inner-city. If everytime one of us moves into a middle or high-income bracket, he or she also moves out of the community, it increases the chances of our youth having to look to pimps, drug-peddlers, etc. in order to find someone who is "making it." Crime is popular because it is seen as being lucrative. We speak here, of course, of economic crimes. If a person, particularly a young person, is looking for a way out of having little or nothing(materially), he or she seeks out(consciously or unconsciously) examples or role models to emulate. If he sees more people in his neighborhood who have "made it" by knocking elderly people over the head and taking their money than he sees of those whom have "made it" by performing brain surgery, he or she may be inclined to want to become a mugger.

By remaining in the African community, instead of fleeing from it, African professionals(who make up a large portion of the higher-income stratum) provide our youth with opportunities to see that it is possible to achieve relative economic success without having to commit crime(most of which is committed against other poor people). While it is so often African professionals who rant and rave about crime, it is these same professionals who are the least willing to do anything about it other than to clamor for the placement of more police in our communities, police whom are no more, generally speaking, concerned about our welfare or lives than the political/economic establishment in whose behalf they function.

Additionally, it is these very same African professionals who fail to realize that they are often motivated by the same two forces which motivate the African "criminal element." Those two forces are the American Dream(and its crude offspring, greed and subsequent class snobbishness) and the sense of ethnic inferiority injected into our psyches by the public school system, xtianity, and the commercial media. It is only through the cooperative efforts of all of us, regardless of economic and/or occupational status, that we can work to erase these forces and meaningfully confront the challenges facing us.

Black-from-black flight is no less a threat to our collective progress than is black-on-black crime.

-the editor

The HARAMBEE FLAME is published monthly by the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, an organization of African prisoners at the Nebraska State Prison in Lincoln, Nebraska. We meet every Monday and welcome the participation of our Brothers and Sisters from the outside in our meetings and other activities.

FROM OTHER SOURCES

MILITARY SPENDING AND AFRIKAN UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE U.S. The following passages are excerpted from an article by Marion Anderson on pages 2-11 in the Jan./Feb. issue of THE BLACK SCHOLAR.

"During the period 1970-1978 when the average annual military spending was $85 billion, it cost the jobs of 109,000 black Americans each year. Everytime the military budget went up $1 billion, they lost 1,300 jobs.

"They lost 483,000 jobs in durable and non-durable goods production, construction, services, state and local government. This number was far greater than the 84,000 jobs gained from military contracts even when combined with the jobs of the 290,000 blacks who were members of the armed forces....

"'The Empty Pork Barrel'(published in 1978 and 1981 by Employment Research Associates) documented that military spending at a rate of $85 billion a year is responsible for the annual net loss of 943,000 jobs. Every additional $1 billion of Pentagon spending causes the loss of 11,000 job opportunities in the U.S. The current $180 billion military budget is costing the jobs of 1,300,000 Americans....

"....An $85 billion military budget costs:

-1,560,000 jobs in services which includes hotel and restaurant employees, and clerks;
-1,038,000 state and local government jobs including teachers, police officers, firefighters, social workers and office workers;
-448,000 construction jobs;
-600,000 civilian durable goods jobs with heavy concentrations in steel, automobile manufacture, metal working, and the machinery producing industries;
-200,000 jobs in the non-durable goods industries which include food and clothing."

The FLAME invites your comments, criticisms, information, etc. Send your contributions to: Editor/David L. Rice
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REPRESSION IN SOUTH AFRICA(AZANIA) Information provided here is taken from page 16 of the March 30th. edition of THE GUARDIAN.

-Prime Minister P.W. Botha and his National Party are pushing ahead with efforts to form three separate parliaments--one for the 4.5 million whites, one for the 2.5 million "coloreds," one for the 800,000 Indians, and none for the 21 million black Africans.
-The government recently announced that arrests of black Africans for internal passport(pass law) violations increased 30% last year to 206,022.
-Six members of the African National Congress(a leading liberation movement in the country) are awaiting execution. They were convicted on charges of high treason, murder and sabotage stemming from guerilla attacks on police stations and the Sasol oil facility.
-Police are continuing to harass some 80,000 homeless black Africans in the Cape Town region. In one of their periodic raids last month, police attacked 600 squatter families, destroying the shelters they had constructed out of pieces of wood and plastic sheets.

NOTE: Have you ever heard Orientals refer to themselves as "yellows," Native Americans refer to themselves as "reds," or Chicanos refer to themselves as "browns"? Probably not, because these people have a knowledge of where they are from, by birth or by ancestry. The HARAMBEE FLAME's policy is to refer to African people as "African people," regardless of place of birth or residence. To avoid confusion, when it is necessary to distinguish between Africans born here and Africans born in Africa, we will(as we have been doing) refer to Africans born here as "American-born Africans," or to Africans born in Africa as "Native" or "Native-born Africans."

We have been using a "k" in the spelling of "Afrika" due to the fact that, in most African tribal languages(according to our information), there is no natural "c." Except for use in the name of our organization, we will stop this practice because too many people confuse "Afrikan" with "Afrikaner," a term often used to designate white citizens of the illegitimate state of South Africa.

-the editor

UNCERTAINTY

thirty-one years old
i am nearer to thirty-two
and trying to ask
what am i waiting living for
who will remember
why i laugh
what made me cry
as i try to make it work in synergy
i can remember my first attempt
to prove love
it ended on her stomach
a train derailed
i aged
when i peer into a mirror.

-wili

SANCTUARY

you who are my complement
lie down next to me
grasp me tight and close
wrap me up in gentleness
let me find refuge
in your ibo touch
seek my resting place
in your zulu whispers
and ashanti grace
cuddle me in your embrace
look upon me with comforting eyes
set like sapphires in your hausa face
let me lay my head between your bulbs
sweet fruit of camaroon
let me part your dense ituri brush
to plant my root deep
into your gambian soil
let me sweat and sweetly moan with you
throughout this tunisian night
until the sun breaks over
the glorious peaks
of kilimanjaro.

-david 1. rice

PUBLICATIONS

KUSASA Independent Journal For A Better Tomorrow In South Africa

KUSASA is an independent journal of political analysis, discussion and opinion on South Africa by South Africans opposed to apartheid. Its board of advisors consist mainly of exiled South Africans except for two who are freedom fighters still inside the country. Three of the members of the board are from America. Dr. Manning Marable, one of the members from the U.S., is one of the nation's leading Black scholars.

The journal only costs four dollars a copy and the first issue will be out by mid-April.

Boone Square Apts., #8
Berea, Kentucky
40403

DIRECTORY OF MINORITY ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

The directory contains the names and brief descriptions of more than 400 arts organizations from across the U.S. These organizations include non-profit performing groups, literary and visual arts centers, etc. The listed groups are all headed by African, Native American, Chicano, or other persons of color.

A limited number of copies of the directory are available without charge from the Civil Rights Division of the National Endowment For the Arts; 2401 E St. NW; Washington, D.C.; 20506(202-634-1640/phone).

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